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ABSTRACT

To be used in conjunction with discussions on course planning and overall school assessment, this booklet outlines the different audiences and kinds of evaluations the English teacher needs to consider. The booklet contains lists of questions for parents, students, administrators, and teachers who evaluate instructional goals, strategies, and content, and discusses the following fourteen means of obtaining and recording information for evaluation: (1) anecdotal records, (2) checklist of activities covered, (3) contracts with students, (4) student self-evaluation, (5) student-peer evaluation, (6) parent-teacher conferences, (7) criterion-referenced tests, (8) teacher-constructed tests, (9) individual diagnostic tests, (10) student-teacher conferences, (11) monitoring classroom processes, (12) course outlines and rationales, (13) meetings to negotiate the policies of the school, and (14) the student file. (EL)

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Resources

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In this issue of Resources Marie Brennan and Meryl Hyde present a comprehensive working paper which outlines the different audiences and different kinds of evaluations the classroom teacher needs to take account of. They suggest that the working paper might be used in conjunction with discussions on course planning and overall school assessment. It could also provide a useful basis for an English faculty meeting.

This article originally appeared in Study of Society, Vol. 10, No. 2.

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The Resources section of English in Australia focuses directly on the English classroom. It provides ideas which teachers might find useful within their teaching programs.

The ideas do not represent model lessons. They are resources to be experimented with or reinterpreted according to each teacher's own theory of learning and their understanding of their students.

Contributions in any form are welcome, and should be sent to The Editor, English in Australia, Rusden C.A.E., Blackburn Road, Clayton, Victoria, 3168.

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INTRODUCTION

In this article we want to show how Evaluation is not only a part of planning a curriculum and its outcome, but is (and must be) part of what happens in every classroom every day.

Often evaluation is seen as an end-product, something extra tacked on to a unit or curriculum to test 'effectiveness'. The teacher's summation is usually the only criterion taken into account. Yet every party involved in the education process already makes some evaluation, e.g.

Administration: She's a good teacher.

Teacher: I don't write very well.

Parent: Jenny isn't doing very much reading.

Moffett says that evaluation should indicate:

- to the individual student how effectively he is communicating.
- to the parent how much the student is learning in school.
- to the teacher the needs of the student for diagnosing and advising.
- to the administrator how good a job the teacher is doing, and
- to all parties how effectively the curriculum and materials reach their goals. (p.415)

To actually carry out these functions each party must have ready access to material on which to base evaluation if this evaluation is to be any more than superficial. Each party has the right and the responsibility to be involved in evaluation. Each must be able to question, to consider and to affect future planning. Below, we have outlined the sorts of questions which should be considered by each party. This is followed by a suggested list of means of obtaining and recording information for evaluation.

Ultimately, the responsibility for collecting this information lies with the classroom teacher. She must be able to transmit her perceptions to each party in a different form and also make it possible for them to make their own evaluation.

We suggest this article should be used in conjunction with discussions on course planning and overall school assessment because evaluation is not a separate issue. The type of evaluation must be intrinsic to the course and not displace it or dictate what should be measured. The assessment can then be properly seen as a culmination of a process. It would be useful to start these discussions now for next year.

Parent Questions

- What is my child doing? Why?
- What are my child's main strengths and weaknesses from the school's point of view? (Social as well as 'academic')
- How can I help?
- What can I tell you about my child that will help you in teaching her?
- Do I think the school's programme is well worked out? Have I had a chance to contribute to it?
- What do I believe is important in education? How can I effectively communicate this to the school?
- Is my child improving? Is she happy and satisfied?
- What access do I have to teachers and administration? To my child's work? Am I welcome to discuss my child's progress? How do I do this — appointment, visiting classroom, parent-teacher night?

Student Questions

- What are my main strengths and weaknesses?
- In reference to this unit:
  Do I know the learning goal?
  Do I have any part in deciding what it is?
- Did I achieve the learning goals? How do I know?
  Is the information/process useful to me?
  Is it interesting?
  Am I satisfied?
- What do I do if I have a problem?
- Is my group working well?
  How do I contribute to the group?
  Is the group helping me?
  Do I work better by myself or in groups?
- Have I improved compared to the last time I performed that activity? e.g., Were my photographs clearer? Did I use evidence well in my argument?
- What did I actually learn?
- Can I use the information and/or skills in another context?

Administration Questions

(e.g. Head of Department, Education Committee, Principal)

- Are the school's structures successful in enabling parents, students, teachers and administration to make a proper evaluation of the learning at the school?
- How does a teacher's practice fit into the overall learning policy and statements of the school? Do these policies need revising?
- Have all parties concerned in the evaluative process had an opportunity to define these policies?
- Is the curriculum regularly revised and co-ordinated in the light of the evaluation? How is this reflected in the stated policy of the school?
- In what areas does this teacher need assistance and support, e.g., in-serving training, a projectionist's licence, opportunities to reflect, access to outside help?
- What has this teacher got to offer to other members of staff at the school or elsewhere? How can I ensure this exchange occurs?

Teacher Questions

- Do the students seem to be improving as a result of our work? How can I tell?
- How do I cater for a range of abilities and interests in the class?
- Are the methods and content successful?
  Are the students enjoying it?
  What are their criticisms?
- Are my aims confined to things I can most easily test?
- Why are the students doing this particular course?
- What learning principles form the basis for the course?
- Why did I include this topic and approach in the curriculum?
- What part do students play in decision about the curriculum?
- How does my programme fit into the development/the school education policy?
- Am I ensuring that students, parents and administration have access to material to make their own evaluation?

Means of Obtaining and Recording Information for Evaluation

1. Anecdotal records
2. Checklist cum diary of activities covered
3. Contracts with students
4. Student self-evaluation
5. Student-peer evaluation
6. Parent-teacher conferences
7. Criterion-referenced tests
8. Teacher-constructed tests
9. Individual diagnostic tests
10. Student-teacher conferences
11. Monitoring class room processes
12. Course outlines and rationales
13. Meetings to negotiate the policies of the school
14. Student file

1. Anecdotal Records

Everyday, teachers are informally evaluating: *"Maria works better with Jane", "Debbie is having trouble with that book'.* Putting some of these evaluations onto paper is often very useful for the teacher, especially if the notes/jottings are concerned with oral work and group interaction. Written work is comparatively easy to evaluate. Speech and interaction are less easy to document other than on tape. Yet they are just as important in the learning process. Sometimes, the concentration on just one individual or small group of students can focus the teacher's attention onto aspects of the course or particular problems which were previously unnoticed.

7.4.79 Con L. didn't seem to be coping too well today. He spent almost no time working and distracted others, especially George and Jim. Is he in the right group? – perhaps he'd work better with Donna rather than in a larger group. A special job for those two tomorrow – proof-reading class magazine, adding headings, choosing illustrations. If there are only two of them, with very specific tasks, he might not be able to escape work so easily. Check what he's actually finished – go through with him on Thursday. Rod mentioned having hassles with him last year – were they the same? What did he find useful? What sort of home back-up is there?

21.4.79 Read aloud **Living with Animals** pp.2–14. Retold accurately with a fair amount of detail. Used info. in his project in own words.

2. Checklist cum Diary of Activities Covered

A diary of activities covered can be kept by either teacher or student or both. It's often useful in the front of a student's folder and is a good way to check on a 'balanced diet' of activities and an excellent basis for parent-teacher-student communication. A master-checklist of possible activities is also useful in the planning stages of a unit and for passing on from year-to-year as a summary, e.g., of content, activities, books read. We have included Fraenkel's list as an example.

Reference: Jack R. Fraenkel: "The Importance of Learning Activities", **Social Education,** November 1973, and reprinted in **Study of Society**, Vol. 9, No. 2, July 1978.

Intake		Organiz'nal*	Demonstrat.*	Creative*
Reading	books articles magazines newspapers dittoes labels adverts. circulars pamphlets handbills posters	outlining chart making graphing mapping time-line building diagramming arranging note-taking filing question-answering question-asking	role-playing discussing writing drawing question-forming reporting explaining analyzing generalizing building singing dancing modelling	solving problems Inventing new uses for things composing songs or poetry writing essays or stories role-creating miming painting writing fiction question-asking cartooning hypothesizing
Observing (looking watching, seeing, photographing, etc.)	experiments films slides filmstrips pictures drawings paintings photographs people buildings television	stating re-stating building summarizing writing identifying categorizing choosing recording experimenting ordering sorting	describing debating photographing reacting story-telling preparing murals applying sketching choosing	predicting singing drawing dancing question-forming proposing building creating a mural discussing
Hearing (listening to)	records guest speakers lectures music debates discussions radio			
Touching	objects artifacts buildings natural environment			
Interviewing	speakers friends parents other adults (especially older adults like grandparents)			
Tasting	foods liquids			

*Some activities legitimately fit into more than one category, depending on the purpose behind the activity.

3. Contracts with Students

A system of contracts enable students to have power over their own learning. The student decides what it is she wishes to learn within an area, works out how to go about learning this, and then evaluates whether it has been learned or not.

One teacher has used contracts in the Mathematics area. She outlines what Maths is about and the students decide what they wish to learn, e.g., a student who didn't understand about measuring in metres marked out a section in metres on the asphalt. He then asked other students to hand-pass, throw or kick a football and measured the distances. He thought of making a graph to show the relative distances. At the end of this activity, the student evaluated his understanding of measurement in metres and decided on a new contract.

4. Student Self-Evaluation

Often when students evaluate their own efforts new insights are available. Students sometimes volunteer information about specific problems they are having. Students' perceptions about effort applied, the value of lessons and their own standard of work, don't always match the teacher's perceptions. Students are generally more critical of themselves in their reports than the teacher is in hers. The sort of honesty required in such a process demands a trusting relationship between student and teacher.

One teacher who encourages students to write their own reports says: "It gives the student responsibility; some sense of really being involved in his/her learning process; the ability to discuss in a free natural way — rather than waiting for a 'C' or pass. I think we have a duty to kids to make the 'evaluation game' a more credible thing and it seems that one way of doing this is to involve them."

Carlo L. wrote this about himself in June '78.

I think I have been trying hard to learn because I have thought about what I wanted to be when I leave school and I had a talk with my teacher about it and I just love having Debates and bieng in disscussions and reading I do a fare bit I thought of bieng a Soliciter and I said to myself "well English is the one I have to work on" My teacher has helped me a real lot She was the only I could realy talk to about what I thought and English is probably one of my best subjects but last year I could not stand it I suppose its because the teacher realy likes to help me and thierfor I can work better. and I like writing down a lot because it helps me when I am in a discussion because I can just think back to what I wrote.

5. Student-Peer Evaluation

Genuine and useful feedback from students about themselves and their peers takes a while to build up. It can start from simple activities, e.g.,

- observing a group and discussing afterwards what happened,
- underlining two things they would like to see changed in a written assignment,
- discussing how different individuals have written about the same thing.

Some rules may be negotiated, e.g., "Only positive suggestions will be tolerated." Over time, more complex activities will follow as the members of the group build confidence in each other and judgements — about whether praise or criticism is appropriate — become less teacher-centred.

6. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Meaningful discussions between parents and teachers should be encouraged. A file containing samples of the student's work should provide the basis for such a discussion about the child's development, the activities undertaken and extra help needed. The parent can share the insights she has about her child and encourage the teacher to expand her view of how a particular programme is assisting. It is crucial that the parent has access to this evidence of learning if she is to make an evaluation of her child's progress.

7. Criterion-Referenced Tests

These are tests carefully designed to measure whether someone has or has not achieved a specific goal or stated objective. These tests are not NORM-REFERENCED (competitive against the performance of others) nor are they ABSOLUTE (e.g. one hundred per cent).

These tests are difficult to construct -- stating a precise objective and then writing questions to test it.

Kevin Piper at ACER has produced for The National Committee on Social Science Teaching a set of such tests with the objectives outlined. Each Australian post-primary school should have received a copy (large, yellow folder, with teacher's handbook). If your objectives are among those stated, you'll be able to use them directly. Otherwise they're very useful as a guide to one aspect of evaluation, a help in constructing your own tests or units.

8. Teacher-Constructed Tests

We believe that the activities associated with a unit of work or curriculum should be designed so that they provide feedback to the teacher and student about development. If you want to include tests, try to ensure that they measure what they actually set out to test.

9. Individual Diagnostic Tests

One example of useful diagnostic tests is the CLOZE procedure on written materials.

A Cloze passage is one in which words have been systematically deleted and replaced by blanks. Cloze passages may be used to determine:

(a) a student's instructional and reading level and

(b) a student's ability to comprehend or understand a particular piece of written material (e.g. part of a student textbook).

The procedure has been used successfully with readers from fourth-grade pupils to adults. It could be useful in helping determine the suitability of a particular textbook.

To Construct a Cloze Passage:

1. Choose a 300 word selection. Leave the first and last 25 words of the passage intact.
2. Beginning with the **thirtieth** word in the passage, delete every fifth word and replace it with a blank until there are fifty blanks. All blanks should be of uniform length.

Administering the Test

1. Before administering the Cloze test, direct the readers to complete each blank with the exact word they think has been deleted. The test should have no time limit and students should receive no help.
2. Tests should be collected and scored, marking correct only those answers which match the original word exactly. (Mis-spellings are correct if the scorer believes the correct word was intended but **synonyms are to be marked incorrect**).

Analysing the Result:

1. Students who correctly complete 40-55 per cent of the blanks may be expected to adequately comprehend that material after some instruction. The passage may be said to be at their 'instructional level'.
2. If a student is unable to successfully complete 40 per cent of the blanks, the material is too difficult for use, even with instruction. The student should then be tested with easier material.
3. If a student correctly completes more than 55 per cent of the blanks, he may be expected to read the passage without instruction (e.g. private research or study; individualised learning; home-work assignments). The teacher may want to test such students on more difficult material to find an instructional level.

We Stress:

This is a simple measure and is approximate. Use it as a starting point only. Many other factors need to be taken into account in determining the readability of material for students.

10. Student-Teacher Conferences

The student file with activities listed, samples of writing, tapes of reading behaviour, provides the basis for meaningful discussions. The teacher can focus on traits and trends, e.g., the types of spelling errors, reading material, group behaviour; and should encourage students to be frank about their own progress. A discussion about needs/ strengths will open the way for planning together.

11. Monitoring Classroom Processes

Inquiry/discovery methods of looking at classrooms yield useful information to those interested in the learning process, e.g.:

- How is the classroom lesson perceived by those involved?
- Are the teacher's intentions clear?
- Do the teacher's intentions match those of the students?
- Is there room for working out directions together?

Teachers can observe one another in this process and interview groups of students to gain this information. Then they can pool insights, trouble-shoot together and share the burden of formulating what to look for and how to plan from what is discovered.

What kinds of observable student and teaching behaviours might take place in a 'good' classroom?

1. *Teacher in a non-directive role.*
2. *Teacher as a resource person.*
3. *Frequent group work.*
4. *Working noise level.*
5. *Visible student interest.*
6. *Teacher and student movement around the class.*
7. *Teacher asking lots of questions.*
8. *Students asking lots of questions.*
9. *Lots of discussion and problem investigation.*
10. *Relaxed, supportive environment.*
11. *Variety of activities.*
12. *Respect for each other's ideas.*
13. *Student-to-student communication.*
14. *Activities building towards concept development.*
15. *Interrelation of goals and activities.*

(From **Man: A course of Study**, Evaluation Booklet, p.88)

An Observer's Checklist

Evaluation of the lesson

Factual questions	___:___:___	*Opinion questions*
Short answer	___:___:___	*Lengthy response*
Questions mostly from teacher	___:___:___	*Questions mostly from students*
Exchanges largely student to teacher	___:___:___	*Exchanges largely student to student*
Teacher sets and controls agenda	___:___:___	*Students initiate topics of discussion*
Teacher's role: authority	___:___:___	*Teacher's role: non-participant*
Students have no clear sense purpose	___:___:___	*Students have clear sense of purpose*
Less than ⅓ student participation	___:___:___	*Almost all students participate*
Student interest low	___:___:___	*Student interest high*
Class is quiet	___:___:___	*Class is noisy*

General teacher style

Teacher's stance: apart from students	___:___:___	*Physically close to students*
Practically no teacher movement	___:___:___	*Much teacher movement*
Teacher doesn't draw out students	___:___:___	*Teacher makes efforts to draw out students*
Teacher is strict with regard to student behaviour	___:___:___	*Teacher is permissive*
Teacher 'talks down' to students — much	___:___:___	*Teacher 'talks down' to students — none*
Teacher dominates the class	___:___:___	*Teacher and students work together co-operatively*

(from **Man: A Course of Study**, Evaluation Booklet, p.89)

12. Course Outlines and Rationales

These need to be available to all parties.

13. Meetings to Negotiate the Policies of the School

The policy of the school should be based on:

- the needs, abilities, interests and backgrounds of the students.
- the values of the individuals or groups involved.
- the nature of the local neighbourhood especially its culture, resources, unique needs.
- the nature of the particular school.
- the policy of the appropriate teaching division of the Education Department.

The policy should be developed by the Principal and staff in consultation with parents, school council, pupils and outside resource people.

Meetings to negotiate the policies of the school should have representatives from **all** the above groups who must have access to relevant information to assist them in the preparation and planning of school policies ... information of the type recommended in this article.

14. Student File

This 'slice of life' view of a student represents the basis for all the other information-gaining methods. Therefore we consider it the most important. The file would provide information to all participants in the evaluation process about the development of a student over time and the relative suitability of the programme. It would show what she actually can and can't do.

The file would provide the discussion base for:

- student/teacher meetings
- teacher/student/parent meetings
- teacher/teacher meetings — re individual children, programmes, curriculum, policy.

The file, belonging to the student, would be helpful in transition from school to school. It would be a school-life-long record of progress for an individual student to chart and evaluate her own development.

File of Student Work

Talk (tapes and anecdotal records)	*individual* *small group discussion* *teacher and student* *student and outsider* *oral presentation*
Writing (samples)	*individual* *small group* *private — diary* *public* *rough drafts developed* *own reports*
Reading (tapes and anecdotal records)	*individual silent* *individual aloud* *part of group process* *retell* *Cloze*
Other Media (samples)	*film, tape, video, photo, drawing, cartoon.*

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